

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9981

INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI

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SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROCEEDINGS ON BANGLADESH RESOLUTION

REF: ISLAMABAD 5549

SUMMARY: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PASSED BANGLADESH RECOGNITION
RESOLUTION IN EARLY HOURS JULY 10. OPPOSITION WALKED OUT
AFTER FAILURE ITS EFFORTS DELAY PROCEEDINGS. BHUTTO,
WINDING UP DEBATE, DENOUNCED OPPOSITION AS DISLOYAL.
NAP LEADER WALI KHAN EXPLAINED WALKOUT AS PROTEST AGAINST
GOVERNMENT'S DOMESTIC POLICIES. END SUMMARY.

1. RESOLUTION APPROVING RECOGNITION BANGLADESH BY GOP
AT ITS DISCRETION (TEXT REPORTED SPETEL) APPROVED
IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN EARLY HOURS JULY 10 AFTER
MARATHON SESSION. POLITICAL OPPOSITION, WHICH HAD WALKED
OUT OF ASSEMBLY WHEN PRESIDENT BHUTTO BEGAN HIS ADDRESS,
STAGED SECOND WALK-OUT AFTER LENGTHY PROCEDURAL
WRANGLE. OPPOSITION ATTEMPTED CHALLENGE LEGALITY OF
RESOLUTION (MAHMUD ALI KASURI) AND ENDEAVORED TO EXTEND
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DEBATE FOR SEVERAL DAYS (WALI KHAN). GOP SPOKESMEN

INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO GIVE OPPOSITION EQUAL TIME IN DEBATE, BUT NO MORE. WALI KHAN THEN ANNOUNCED WALK-OUT ON GROUNDS THAT INSUFFICIENT TIME WAS BEING GRANTED FOR DEBATE.

2. OPPOSITION SPOKESMAN SHAUKAT HYAT WAS PREPARED TO INTRODUCE RESOLUTION SIMILAR TO THAT PROPOSED BY GOVERNMENT BUT WHICH SPECIFIED NO WAR CRIMES TRIALS AND RETURN OF ALL POW'S AS PRECONDITIONS AND WOULD HAVE REQUIRED FURTHER NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APPROVAL OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH LEADING TOWARD RECOGNITION AND RESOLUTION OF POW AND DISPLACED CIVILIAN POPULATION PROBLEMS. AT LAST MINUTE, SHAUKAT FAILED MOVE HIS RESOLUTION, PROBABLY AS RESULT PRESSURE FROM COLLEAGUES IN OPPOSITION.

3. IN COMMENTS TO PRESS, WALI SAID OPPOSITION WAS RESOLUTION AS CONSTITUTING VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN GOP AND HENCE WALKED OUT BECAUSE GOP WAS DENYING DEMOCRACY IN BALUCHISTAN AND FRONTIER. WALI CLAIMED EARLIER WALKOUT DURING PRESIDENT'S SPEECH WAS TO SHOW DISPLEASURE OVER BHUTTO'S JULY 8 SPEECH ISLAMABAD 5514) IN WHICH HE CRITICIZED OPPOSITION LEADERS IN VIOLATION OF WHAT WALI DESCRIBED AS MURREE AGREEMENT BETWEEN BHUTTO AND OPPOSITION TO CEASE PUBLIC ATTACKS ON EACH OTHER.

4. IN WINDING UP DEBATE, BHUTTO CASTIGATED NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY FOR ITS FAILURE TO SUPPORT RESOLUTION DESPITE ITS PAST RECORD ENDORSING EARLY RECOGNITION. HE ACCUSED OPPOSITION IN EXTRAVAGANT TERMS OF WANTING TO PROVOKE BLOODSHED, OF HATRED FOR EVERY CONCEPT OF PAKISTAN, OF PLOTTING WITH COUNTRY'S ENEMIES TO DESTROY NATION, AND AT BEING MORE GANDHIAN THAN GANDHI HIMSELF. CONCLUDING, HOWEVER, HE ASSURED ASSEMBLY HE WOULD DO HIS BEST IN NEGOTIATING FOR PAKISTAN. ASSEMBLY WAS THEN PROROGUED.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH BHUTTO OBVIOUSLY MIFFED AT NAP PERFORMANCE AND WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE HAD NAP SUPPORT, HARD-CORE OPPOSITION TO RECOGNITION IS CENTERED IN PUNJAB AND KARACHI WHERE NAP HAS LITTLE FOLLOWING. NAP SUPPORT TO GOP WOULD HAVE LITTLE AMELIORATING EFFECT ON JAMAAT-I-ISLAMI AND OTHER RELIGIOUS PARTIES, MUSLIM LEAGUE, AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TEHRIK-I-ISTIQLAL, ALL OF WHICH VOLUBLY OPPOSE RECOGNITION. ON OTHER HAND, WALI, HAD HE SUPPORTED RESOLUTION, MIGHT HAVE PRECIPATED SWIFT COLLAPSE OF JOINT OPPOSITION UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT, WHICH HAS SOME UTILITY TO HIM AND OPPOSITION LEADERS. MOREOVER, WALI AND BALUCH NAP LEADERS ARE APPARENTLY DETERMINED NOT TO OFFER ANY SUPPORT TO BHUTTO SO LONG AS BUGTI GOVERNMENT REIGNS IN QUETTA. HAD MURREE TALKS SUCCEEDED, PROBABLE THAT NAP WOULD HAVE

SUPPORTED BHUTTO ON THIS ISSUE IN ASSEMBLY AS IT HAS
SUPPORTED RECOGNITION EARLIER.
SOBER

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